The Builder.

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*SATURDAY, MARCH 24, 1849.*

AMONGST the new works at this moment before us is a thin folio of Illustrations of Strixton Church, Northamptonshire, by Mr. E. Barr.*

Strixton Church is a remarkably simple Early English Church, consisting of a nave 20 feet wide, and twice 20 in length, and a chancel 30 feet long, and half that in width. It has a bell-cot at the west-end, and a little porch on the north side. It will seat 200 persons, supposing one-fourth to be children, and it is given "as an ancient example, of which the general effect is pleasing and good, while it may be built at a very moderate cost," —750*l.* says the estimator, including the fittings. The object of the publication is that the church may be copied. The introduction says, in tone gratulatory, that the bell-cot given in a similar publication of Wilcote Church "has been *copied* in numerous instances since," and that this of Strixton will probably "also be *followed*." The church is "an excellent model for *imitation*;" it presents valuable features "for an architect to *copy*," and so it goes on copy, copy, copy,—itself being only forty-five lines in length.

Here are four walls with a roof on them, two doors required for access, and a few narrow windows for light, and all we men of the nineteenth century can do, boasting such power of intellect, and such dominion of knowledge, as dark ages guessed not at, is to copy the structures these ages left, without a thought of our own, and almost without a feeling. As was asked long ago, in our pages,—"Is the fountain of the beautiful a narrow shallow well, into which our fathers dipped and drained the utmost drop at once? Or is it a vast deep ocean, boundless, bottomless, into which they dipped and drew forth beauty, and into which we, in our turn, may dip and draw forth more,—dip with our far longer line, and reach far deeper and far denser regions in the infinite profundity of its teeming, teeming bosom?" It may be thought that we have indeed become a race of brainless imitators.

Of the value of careful representations of ancient examples, the necessity of an intimate acquaintance with the works of our forefathers, and of full investigations of the principles on which they worked, we have too often spoken to run any risk of being now misunderstood. To re-combine these materials and produce fresh beauties,—to work on these principles under the circumstances immediately occurring, and so to eliminate new results, we may at least aspire, —exhibiting some mind, improving where practicable, and meeting modern requirements.

Mere slavish re-production, and the condition of mind to which such a course necessarily leads, are to be carefully avoided and universally discouraged.

The Architectural Publication Society have issued the first part of their volume of illustrations for the current year, containing twelve plates from drawings by Messrs. John Johnson, Sydney Smirke, J. M. Lockyer, C. Fowler, jun., John Davis, D. Wyatt, D. Mocatta, and T. L. Donaldson. The drawings are illustrative of the terms campanile, ceiling, chimney, corbel, cortile, loggia, pavement, staircase, &c., on which articles will be given, in such a manner as to take their place hereafter in that complete "Architectural Dictionary," at the production of which the society aim.

Under the head "Campanile," we have seven examples, inscribed Genoa (2), Lago di Guarda, Cremona, Mount Cenis, Lombardy, and Messina. "Cortile" is illustrated from the Palazzo Caprarola, by Vignola; "Loggia," from the cathedral, at Spoleto, by Bramante; and under the head "Staircase," there are four suggestive examples, from the castle of Bracciano, near Rome, the Church of Francesco, at Assisi, the Cathedral at Modena, and the Forum Romanum, by Bernini. The plates are executed in lithography, by Messrs. Day, on a paper, it may be well to mention, which will take colour. Of the lithography we cannot speak well; it is unworthy of Messrs. Day's reputation, and should lead the committee to hesitate before placing another set of drawings in their hands.

The idea of "The Architectural Scrap Book," by Messrs. Butler and Hodge, of which the two first parts are before us,* would almost seem to have been taken from the announced intention of the Publication Society, to issue periodical collections of sketches of parts of buildings. If so, the step is in bad taste. The first part contains four plates and seven subjects; Gateway, Magdalen College, Oxford (by Pugin); Chimney-piece, Stowe; Oriel window, Brazenose College, Oxford; two dormers, and two turrets. The authors point attention to the value of a Turret in composition, and remark on the neglect of this inexpensive feature in England.†

America contributes to our budget of books a very useful volume on "School Architecture," by Mr. Barnard, a commissioner of public schools in Rhode Island,‡ of which 20,000 copies have been gratuitously circulated in the States, where the author has been called upon to labour in the cause of common-school improvement, or among the friends of popular education in other parts of the country.§ This book contains a large amount of information on the subject, especially as to the modes of ventilation adopted in the American schoolhouses, and as to the fittings.

The taste displayed in the elevation of most of the schools is not great, if we may judge from the engravings given; but a feeling of the important effect which well-ordered, well-proportioned, and fittingly-adorned buildings have in the education of children and on the character of a nation, is beginning to grow up in America. "Why," says one of their writers, Mrs. Sigourney, "why should not the interior of our schoolhouses aim at somewhat of the taste and elegance of a parlour? Might not the vase of flowers enrich the mantelpiece, and the walls display not only well-executed maps, but historical engravings or pictures? and the bookshelves be crowned with the bust of moralist or sage, orator or father of his country? Is it alleged that the expense, thus incurred, would be thrown away, the beautiful objects defaced, and the fair scenery desecrated? This is not a necessary result. I have been informed by teachers who had made the greatest advances towards the appropriate and elegant accommodation of their pupils, that it was not so. They have said it was easier to enforce habits of neatness and order among objects whose taste and value made them worthy of care, than amid that parsimony of apparatus, whose pitiful meanness operates as a temptation to waste and destroy." The same applies in the dwellings of the poor.

And again:—"Let the communities, now so anxious to raise the standard of education, venture the experiment of a more liberal adornment of the dwellings devoted to it. Let them put more faith in that respect for the beautiful, which really exists in the young heart, and requires only to be called forth and nurtured, to become an ally of virtue and a handmaid to religion. Knowledge has a more imposing effect on the young mind, when it stands, like the apostle with the gifts of healing, at the 'beautiful gate of the Temple.' Memory looks back to it more joyously from the distant or desolated tracts of life, for the bright scenery of its early path." "But when young children are transferred from the nursery to those buildings, whose structure, imperfect ventilation, and contracted limits furnish too strong an idea of a prison, the little spirits, which are in love with freedom and the fair face of nature, learn to connect the rudiments of knowledge with keen associations of task-work, discomfort, and thraldom."

Let us all strive to cultivate a perception of the Beautiful, satisfied that it tends not merely to refine and delight, but to make better the world.

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## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A KNOWLEDGE AND OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ART BY DESIGNERS.*

IN painting, the artist has to embody his ideas of scenes, persons, or incidents, by a pictorial representation of natural objects; and in proportion to the skill of his design and the truth of the representation, must be the vividness with which his idea will be expressed. In considering what would be the most essential and universal characteristics of the subject to be depicted,—as light and atmosphere in a landscape, action and expression in a group of figures, breathing individuality in a portrait,—we arrive at once at the most important points which the painter has to attain by means of his art, and the most difficult of representation by the use of pigments on a flat surface. And here the principle that illusory imitation is not the province of painting, becomes strikingly apparent; for can light, atmosphere, motion, breath, vitality, be imitated? They can only be indicated suggestively by depicting their visible effects upon the scene or object: which of course implies an accurate representation of the real forms, or rather, of their momentary appearance under the particular aspect; for it is the apparent forms, surface, and hues of things that the painter has to depict, though he can only do this by understanding their real form and nature, and the effects of light and atmosphere upon them. A picture is (or should be) the representation of what is seen, either in reality or in the mind's eye, from one point of view, at one moment of time, and should convey the impression of an idea stamped upon the mind of the painter at that moment; which all fine pictures do. Design gives unity and definition to the conception. But if the artist, unmindful of these principles, perverts his executive skill by imitating to *illusion* the

* "Elevations, Sections, and Details of Strixton Church, Northamptonshire." J. H. Parker, Oxford and London. 1849.

* "The Architectural Scrap Book, containing Sketches of Picturesque and Beautiful parts of Buildings, English and Continental."—Beaufort-buildings, Strand.

† The second part contains an old house in Aldate's-street, Oxford; Well-house in Marquise, near Boulogne; Gateway, Stowe (by Kent); Fire-place, Tate-court; and a tomb in Beaconsfield Church.

‡ "School Architecture; or Contributions to the Improvement of School-houses in the United States." New York: Barnes and Co. There is no English publisher's name on the title-page, but the book could doubtless be obtained at Mr. John Chapman's, Strand.

§ Mr. Barnard's labours in this field have been very extensive: copies of his works have been recently placed in the British Museum.

* See page 123, *ante*.

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